

SENATE BILL 408

By Kilby

AN ACT to name a bridge on or segment of State Route 68 in honor of the late Aubrey J. "Red" Wagner.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor those exemplary public servants who, during their lifetimes, contributed significantly to the growth and prosperity of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, no Tennessean is more deserving of this honor than the late Aubrey J. "Red" Wagner, the longest serving Chairman of the Board in the history of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA); and

WHEREAS, few people have touched as many lives as Red Wagner, a peerless public servant who dedicated forty-four years of his life to TVA's comprehensive mission of providing low-cost electricity to the Southeastern region; and

WHEREAS, after graduating Phi Beta Kappa and *magna cum laude* from the University of Wisconsin, Mr. Wagner accepted a job as a civil engineer with TVA in 1934; he was instrumental in the navigation aspects of the river development program; and

WHEREAS, in 1948, Red Wagner was named Head of the Navigation and Transportation Branch; in 1951, he became Assistant General Manager and then General Manager of TVA; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wagner served on the TVA Board under Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter; President Kennedy appointed him Chairman in 1962, and President Nixon re-appointed him, making Mr. Wagner the longest-serving Chairman of the Board of TVA (1962-1978); and

WHEREAS, some historians state that Mr. Wagner's influence on the direction of TVA and its programs was equaled only by that of its first board; fondly remembered for his integrity,

dedication, and persistence, he turned down numerous lucrative positions in the private sector to remain with TVA; and

WHEREAS, throughout his impressive tenure at TVA, Mr. Wagner's true intention was to be a servant of the people, exemplifying in all aspects of his life's work TVA's motto, "Built for the People of the United States"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wagner's passion for the noble aspirations of the Tennessee Valley Authority transcended his employment; he often fished from his beloved TVA lakes, and he caught his biggest bass from Watts Bar Lake; he also built a vacation home on Watts Bar lake and loved to entertain guests at his family's cabin there; and

WHEREAS, it is thus most appropriate for this General Assembly to name a certain bridge spanning Watts Bar Dam and Lock to honor Mr. Wagner's memory and permanently commemorate his bountiful life of purpose and commitment to the greater good; now, therefore, BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the bridge spanning Watts Bar Dam and Lock on State Route 68 in Rhea and Meigs counties is hereby designated the "Aubrey J. 'Red' Wagner Memorial Bridge" as a lasting tribute to a gentleman who devoted his life to public progress instead of personal profit.

SECTION 2. The department of transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the bridge described in Section 1 as the "Aubrey J. 'Red' Wagner Memorial Bridge".

SECTION 3. The erection of such directional signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. This act shall become operative only if the cost of the manufacture and installation of such signs is paid to the department of transportation from non-state funds within

one (1) year of the effective date of this act. Such payment shall be made prior to any expenditure by the state for the manufacture or installation of such signs. The department shall return any unused portion of the estimated cost to the person or entity paying for such signs within thirty (30) days of the erection of such signs. If the actual cost exceeds the estimated cost, an amount equal to the difference in such costs shall be remitted to the department in non-state funds within thirty (30) days of the sponsoring person or entity receiving an itemized invoice of the actual cost from the department.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.